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ON FISHER'S PETREL (*ÆSTRELATA FISHERI*).

BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

*Plate IV.*

NOTWITHSTANDING more attention has been paid during recent years to the collecting of specimens of the Procellariidæ, no additional information has yet been acquired concerning *Æstrelata fisheri*, described more than twelve years ago from a single specimen obtained in the harbor of Kadiak Island on June 11, 1882, by Mr. Wm. J. Fisher, at that time U. S. Tidal Observer at that station.

With the view to bringing this rare and little known bird prominently to the attention of ornithological collectors, as well as to make its identification more easy, this article and the accompanying colored plate are herewith presented.

*Æstrelata fisheri* Ridgway. FISHER'S PETREL.

*Specific characters.*—Inner webs of primaries abruptly white for at least the inner half; top of head white, spotted with dusky gray; back uniform bluish gray; inner web of two outer rectrices vermiculated with white and ash gray; under parts largely smoky brown. Wing about 10 inches.

*Adult (?) male*, type of the species, No. 89431, U. S. Nat. Mus., Kodiak Island, Alaska, June, 11, 1882; William J. Fisher.—Head, neck, and lower parts pure white, but this unvaried only on sides of forehead, lores, malar region, chin, throat, chest and under tail-coverts; feathers of middle of forehead (longitudinally) and fore part of crown, marked with a central spot of slate-color, the feathers of the hinder part of crown and occiput similarly marked but the spots becoming gradually more transverse posteriorly, and, at the same time, the lighter borders of the feathers more grayish; a blackish spot immediately before and beneath the eye; sides of breast washed with grayish, and belly and flanks overlaid by a nearly uniform wash of deep smoky gray, all the feathers being pure snow-white immediately beneath the surface; many of the feathers of the sides barred with plumbeous gray; anterior under wing-coverts dark sooty gray or slate-color, the coverts along the outer margin of the under side of the wing mainly of the same color; rest of wing-lining, with inner webs of primaries, uniform pure white, the quills having merely a narrow, but abruptly defined, dusky stripe next the shaft, the white portion being margined for a short distance along the terminal portion with grayish; axillars mainly plumbeous, or barred with the same. Hind neck, back, scapulars, rump, and upper tail-coverts plumbeous, darkest on the lower part of the rump, the feathers with distinct dusky shaft-streaks, except on the hind neck. Tail white with very irregular zigzag bars of plumbeous gray, the innermost rectrices mainly gray (the middle pair, however, are wanting). Lesser wing-coverts dark slate (many shades darker than the back); greater coverts, secondaries, and tertials plumbeous gray, more silvery toward edge of wing, very distinctly edged with pure white; three outer primaries and primary coverts slate black, the inner quills gradually more grayish, and narrowly bordered with white. Bill wholly deep black; tarsi, most of basal phalanx of inner toe, and basal portion of webs, light brownish (flesh-color in life?), rest of feet dusky. Wing, 10.15 inches; tail, 4.00, slightly graduated; culmen, 1.00; depth of bill at base, .40, width at base, .40; tarsus, 1.35; middle toe, 1.40.

Fisher's Petrel appears to be very distinct from any other known species, its nearest relatives, apparently, being Peale's Petrel, *Æ. gularis* (PEALE),<sup>1</sup> and De Filippi's Petrel, *Æ. defilippii*.

<sup>1</sup> *Procellaria gularis* PEALE, Zool. U. S. Expl. Exp. 1848, 299 (Antarctic Ocean; U. S. Nat. Mus.).

*Estrelata gularis* BREWSTER, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, IV, 1881, 94 (part).—BAIRD, BREWER, & RIDGWAY, Water B. N. Am. 11, 1884, 397 (part).

*Estrelata gularis* RIDGWAY, Man. N. Am. B. 1887, 67.

*Estrelata mollis* (nec *Procellaria mollis* GOULD) COUES, Proc. Ac. Nat. Sci. Philad. 1866, 150, 151 (part).

*piana* GIGLIOLI and SALVADORI.<sup>1</sup> The former agrees with *Æ. fisheri* only in the pattern of coloration of the inner web of the primaries, being otherwise very distinct in plumage and having the bill much stouter, the tarsi and toes decidedly shorter, and the wing also shorter. *Æ. defilippiana*, although bearing a slight superficial resemblance in general coloration, is even more distinct, as the following comparative diagnoses, drawn up from the type of *Æ. fisheri* and two examples of *Æ. defilippiana*, one in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, the other in the collection of Canon Tristram, will show:—

COMPARATIVE CHARACTERS OF *Æstrelata fisheri* AND *Æ. defilippiana*.

*Æ. fisheri*.—Lower parts chiefly smoky grayish brown on the surface, this color nearly uniform on belly and flanks; greater wing-coverts, secondaries and tertials silvery gray, broadly edged with pure white, the lesser coverts uniform dusky in strong contrast; rectrices (except middle pair) white, transversely vermiculated on both webs with ash gray; top of head white, spotted with dusky; feet, including webs, dusky, except basal portion of inner web and toe. Wing, 10.15; tail, 4.00 (graduated for .90 of an inch); culmen, 1.00; tarsus, 1.35; middle toe with claw, 1.70.

*Æ. defilippiana*.—Lower parts entirely pure white, except on sides of breast, which are ash gray, like the nape. Outer surface of wings uniform dusky; rectrices uniform ash gray, except two outer pairs, which have inner webs white (the second finely sprinkled with gray towards end), the outer webs finely mottled gray; feet, including webs, pale-colored (fleshy in life), except outer side of outer toe, which is dusky. Wing, 8.70–9.00; tail, 3.80–4.25 (graduated for .90–1.00 inch); culmen, 1.04–1.10; tarsus, 1.07–1.20; middle toe with claw, 1.37–1.40.

The two species are, in fact, very distinct. *Æ. defilippiana* is decidedly less in general size, although the bill is absolutely larger than in *Æ. fisheri*. The lower parts are entirely white,

<sup>1</sup> *Æstrelata defilippiana* GIGLIOLI & SALVADORI, Ibis, V, n. s. Jan. 1869, 63 (off coast of Peru, lat. 18° 4' S., long. 79° 35' W.); Atti Soc. Ital. Nat. XI, 1869, 453.—GIGLIOLI, Fauna Vertebr. nell' Oceano, 1870, 43.—RIDGWAY, Man. N. Am. B. 1887, 68.

*Æstrelata defilippiana* SALVIN, Rowley's Orn. Misc. I, pt. iv, May, 1876, 255, pl. 33.—RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. VI, 1886, 657, 658, in text; VIII, 1885, 17, 18.

except on the sides of the breast, where there is an encroachment of the pure ash gray of the nape. The top of the head is quite uniform gray, except anteriorly, where the feathers are bordered with white, producing a distinct squamation. The wings are entirely concolor on their outer surface, and the inner web of the outer tail-feather is wholly pure white.

The synonymy of *Æ. fisheri* is as follows :—

*Æ. Estrelata fisheri* RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. V, June 26, 1883, 656 (Kadiak, Alaska; U. S. Nat. Mus.) ; VIII, 1885, 17, 18 (comparison with *Æ. defilippiana*).—BAIRD, BREWER, & RIDGWAY, Water B. N. Am. II, 1884, 396.—COUES, Key, 2d ed. 1884, 780.

*Æ. Estrelata fisheri* AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, Check-List, 1886, No. 100.—RIDGWAY, Man. N. Am. B. 1887, 68.

?? *Fregatta grallaria* (nec *Procellaria grallaria* VIEILLOT) NELSON, Cruise Corwin in 1881 (1883), 113 (Aleutian Islands southward).

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## GÄTKE'S HELIGOLAND.<sup>1</sup>

BY ELLIOTT COUES.

There is no Heligoland but Heligoland, and Gätke is its prophet. The name means "holy land," and this island in the North Sea is a sort of Mecca to which all good birds must make their pilgrimage or perish in the attempt. Heligoland may more literally be called the magnetic pole of the bird-world, so irresistibly does it seem to attract birds to deviate from ordinary Zugstrassen (flight-lines)—either in isolated wanderings from Asia, Africa or America, or in vast mass-migrations that overshadow the land like clouds crossing the skies. Heligoland is the most peculiarly favored, longest

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<sup>1</sup> Heligoland | as an | Ornithological Observatory | the Result of Fifty Years' Experience | by Heinrich Gätke | [etc., 5 lines] | translated by | Rudolph Rosenstock, M. A. Oxon. | [Vignette and motto] | Edinburgh : David Douglas, 10 Castle Street | 1895 | 1 vol., roy. 8vo. pp. xii, 599, 2 portraits of author and various figs. in text.